Tirah jirga warns against 'forced' displacement

By Our Correspondent

KHYBER: A jirga of different tribes of Tirah Valley on Wednesday reiterated their opposition to 'forced' displacement of people in the event of a military operation against terrorists, warning the government to desist from any efforts to compel the residents to leave their homes.

Addressing the jirga held at Lar Bagh Markaz, a leading cleric and district emir of Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam-Fazl Maulana Hazrat Khan made it clear that people of Tirah would rather prefer to die instead of vacating their homes.

He told the authorities concerned that it was the final and unanimous decision of all the Tirah tribes and they would never deviate from their decision in any circumstances.

"We want the chief minister, who is from Bara, and the other two parliamentarians to convey their message to the powers that be," he said amid sloganeering by the participants, who had converged in large numbers.

Hazrat Khan warned that anyone from among the Tirah residents expressing his willingness to leave their houses would be considered as a collective enemy of the people of the valley and strict action in accordance with local traditions would be taken against them.

The elder also took exception to the body search of local women and taking of photographs by male security personnel at Dwa Thoey checkpost and demanded of the security officials to immediately halt the practice as it was against the tribal customs and traditions.

The jirga was held at a time when there is strong impression among Tirah residents about the launch of a military operation against different terror groups.

KP records 80 more dengue cases

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday recorded 80 more dengue cases, taking the number of patients to 5,150 this year.

A report released by Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System of the health department said that the current tally of hospitalised patients had reached 42 as 29 more people checked into hospitals due to the mosquito-borne disease.

The province has so far recorded two deaths, both from Mardan, one of the high-risk districts. Of the total patients, 4,781 have recovered and the number of active patients is 367, including 116 in Peshawar, 42 in Mardan, 18 in Nowshera, 16 in Swabi and 11 in Charsadda.

The disease is widespread and except a few districts, cases are being recorded from all districts, with Charsadda having 1,091 cases, the most infected district, followed by Kohat's 672, Peshawar's 579, Mardan's 447, Haripur's 382, Mansehra's 338, Swabi's 174, Lower Dir's 157, Dera Ismail Khan's 140, Abbottabad's 138, Nowshera's 130, Malakand's 117, Hangu's 115 and Bajuar's 103.

Health officials associated with the anti-dengue efforts say cases will continue to emerge as weather is still favourable for production of mosquitoes, the carriers and transmitters of the disease.

However, they want the people to adhere to the preventive measures and stop storing water in uncovered pots to deny breeding spots to mosquitoes. — Bureau Report

VOLLEYBALL players in action during government middle schools annual sports tournament in Peshawar on Wednesday. — APP

CM Afridi resents 'restrictions' on wheat movement

Senate committee members to take up the matter with Punjab govt

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mohammad Sohail Afridi on Wednesday said that Article 151 of the Constitution guaranteed free trade among provinces and no provincial government was empowered to obstruct transportation of food or essential commodities.

During a meeting with members of Senate Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination here, he underlined the need for mutual understanding and continued cooperation among provinces to find a lasting solution to wheat supply issue.

A statement issued from the chief minister's secretariat said that the delegation congratulated Mr Afridi on assuming office and discussed with him different issues related to governance, economic cooperation and coordination among provinces.

The delegates also discussed restrictions imposed by the Punjab government on free inter-provincial movement of wheat.

"Political differences must not come at the cost of people's livelihoods. Any hurdle to wheat and flour supply not only strains relations among provinces but adversely affects economic well-being of people," said the chief minister.

He lauded the role of Senate committee members and described them as true representatives and ambassadors of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He also appreciated their efforts to promote inter-provincial harmony and strengthen the federation through dialogue and coordination.

The delegation included senators Dilawar Khan, Mohsin Aziz, Naseema Ehsan, Nasir Mahmood, Hidayatullah Khan, Niaz Ahmad and Musaddiq Masood among others. The adviser to chief minister on finance, Muzammil Aslam, Food Secretary Shah Mahmood and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, another statement said that Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) held a meeting with Senator Dilawar Khan in the chair to deliberate on the issue of inadequate coordination between the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab over supply of wheat.

The meeting was attended by Senator Hidayatullah Khan, Senator Niaz Ahmed, Senator Abdul Qadir, Senator Naseema Ehsan and Senator Nasir Mehmood Butt. Senior officials and representatives of Ministry of IPC and KP departments of IPC and food also participated in the meeting to provide technical input and assist the committee in its deliberations.

Food Secretary Shah Mahmood presented a detailed briefing on the province's wheat stock position. He said that only 17 per cent of KP's wheat requirement was met through local production while 83 per cent was procured from open market in Punjab.

He said that the government of Punjab imposed restrictions on inter-provincial movement of wheat to KP in August 2025 that led to market instability and posed a potential threat to food security in the province.

The food secretary said that repeated written communications from KP authorities to their counterparts in Punjab regarding restoration of wheat supply had so far remained unanswered. He said that the concern had been highlighted earlier by adviser to chief minister on finance during a meeting chaired by prime minister wherein 'Interim Wheat Policy-2025' was being discussed.

An analysis of wheat flour prices from August to October 2025 indicated a gradual increase in prices following the restrictions imposed by Punjab, underscoring urgent need for inter-provincial coordination and policy harmony.

After detailed discussion, the committee observed that mutual cooperation and equitable sharing of resources among provinces was vital for ensuring economic stability and sustainable national progress. The committee unanimously decided to take up the matter with relevant authorities of the government of Punjab to resolve the issue amicably and ensure smooth inter-provincial movement of wheat.

The chairman of the committee appreciated the participation of officials of provincial departments and emphasised that the committee remained committed to promoting cohesive inter-provincial relations and addressing issues of national importance through dialogue and cooperation.

Eight sent to prison in Kohistan embezzlement case

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Accountability courts here on Wednesday sent to prison on judicial remand eight suspects, arrested by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a high-profile case involving alleged embezzlement of more than Rs37 billion in Upper Kohistan district accounts office.

Following completion of their physical remand with NAB, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, five of the suspects were produced before the court of Judge Amjid Zia Siddiqui, whereas remaining three before that of Judge Ali Gohar. Courts sent them to prison on 14-day judicial remand each.

Those produced before Judge Siddiqui included an assistant accounts officer in Kohistan district accounts office, Ulfat Ali, a relative of a prime accused Imran Khan, a junior clerk in communication and works department Abdul Basit and two of the other beneficiaries in the scam Syed Bilal Shah and Syed Moeez Haider.

Similarly, three other suspects produced before the court of Judge Ali Gohar included an official of Kohistan district accounts office, Sher Baz, a contractor Sartaj Khan and a relative of the prime accused Faheem Moin Khan.

The prime accused, Qaiser Iqbal, a head clerk in communication and works department, and his wife had already been sent to prison on judicial remand by an accountability court on Nov 1 after their 14-day physical custody completed with NAB.

So far around 27 accused persons have been arrested in the instant case.

The NAB officials stated that on credible information the bureau had started an inquiry and during preliminary probe it revealed that officials of communication and works department, Upper Kohistan, in connivance with officials of district accounts office, Upper Kohistan, and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) branch there, had misappropriated funds from different projects through bogus withdrawal of funds from the national treasury in the name of several contractors, who had not executed any civil work.

They said that the prime accused and several others were involved in illegal withdrawal and misappropriation of more than Rs37 billion from the contractors security deposit head of an account, G-10113.

They stated that accused persons had abused their respective positions to initiate the process of fraudulent withdrawal from government treasury by creating falsified documentations, which were used to siphon funds from head of account, G-10113.

They said that the accused included officials of district accounts office, communication and works department, commercial banks and scores of private contractors.

Accountability courts have so far confirmed several NAB orders to freeze dozens of moveable and immovable properties including luxurious residences, commercial plazas and plots, expensive vehicles and cash, including foreign currency allegedly owned by several of the accused persons arrested so far.

Around 38 of the frozen properties allegedly belonged to another key accused in the case, Mohammad Riaz, a bank cashier-turned-contractor, and his close relatives.

The said accused had allegedly established some construction companies in the names of his six brothers and subsequently in his name after resignation from the bank.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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150 stranded tourists rescued from Kaghan Valley

By Our Correspondent

MANSEHRA: The police on Wednesday rescued over 150 tourists, including women and children, who were stranded in the snow-covered high-altitude areas of Kaghan Valley.

"We have rescued more than 150 tourists stranded in around 50 vehicles near Babusar Top and other parts of the valley," district police officer Shafiullah Khan Gandapur told reporters.

He said the tourists, who were travelling in the upper parts of Kaghan Valley and between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, were trapped amid heavy snowfall. He said police teams reached the stranded travellers, retrieved their vehicles from the snow, and shifted them to hotels and safe shelters in Naran and nearby areas.

"Our rescue operation continued throughout the night, and all stranded tourists were safely evacuated in police vans. We also provided them with whatever assistance we could," Mr Gandapur said.

He added a tourist van carrying 12 people, including women and children, was also towed to safety using a police patrolling vehicle.

Mr Gandapur said due to inclement weather and icy conditions on Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhad Road, traffic between KP and GB had been suspended for safety reasons.

"If weather clears and ice melts, we will decide when to allow the movement of vehicles between the two regions. For now, traffic beyond Soach area has been restricted," he said.

The National Highway Authority also started removing snow from MNJ Road from Basil downward to Naran so that tourists' stranded vehicles could move to their respective destinations across the country.

Meanwhile, a restaurant in Basel area offered free accommodation and meals to stranded tourists and passengers.

"We extended hospitality to those trapped while travelling between KP and GB when snowfall began and the MNJ Road became slippery and dangerous," said Hussain Deen Swati, the restaurant owner.

A MACHINE removes snow from MNJ Road in Basel area of Kaghan valley, Mansehra, on Wednesday. — Dawn